

National Immunization Survey-Flu: Texas Perspective 2016-17 Season

Background

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) urges everyone six months and older to get vaccinated against influenza, or “the flu”. It is particularly important for pregnant women, young children, older adults and people with chronic health conditions, because people in those groups are at a greater risk of severe complications if they do get the flu.

In order to reach the Immunization Unit goal of eliminating the spread of vaccine preventable disease it is crucial to measure coverage rates for vaccines across the state. Two surveys are used to estimate influenza immunization coverage in Texas; the National Immunization Survey (NIS) measures coverage in children, while the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) collects data on influenza immunization in adults.

National Immunization Survey-Flu (NIS-Flu)

The NIS-Flu combines flu vaccination responses collected from NIS (children 19-35 months), NIS-Teen (adolescents 13-17 years), and the National Immunization Survey-Childhood Influenza Module, or NIS-CIM, (children 6-18 months and 3-12 years). NIS-Flu data are used to estimate annual flu vaccination coverage among children 6 months-17 years at the national level, state level, selected local levels, and in some U.S. territories. These NIS-Flu estimates are based solely on parent or guardian reported data, in contrast to other modules of the NIS which are verified by provider data.

Adult Influenza Estimates

BRFSS contains questions specific to influenza immunization. The data collected from BRFSS allows estimates of influenza immunization coverage to be calculated for adult populations on the national and state level as well as for selected counties and cities. The estimates from BRFSS data are based on self-reported participant data.

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Key Findings for Influenza Immunization for 2016-17 Season

- 2016-2017 seasonal influenza immunization coverage in Texas (43.5 ± 2.0 percent) was below the national coverage estimate for the United States (46.8 ± 0.5 percent). (Figure 1)
- Nationally, influenza immunization coverage increased 1.6 percent from 41.7 percent to 43.3 percent from the 2015-2016 season to the 2016-2017 season. However, influenza immunization coverage decreased 4.4 percent from the 2015-2016 season to the 2016-2017 season for all Texans ≥ 6 months of age.
- Texas childhood influenza immunization coverage is at or above the national average for all reported age groups (children 6 months to 4 years old, children 5 to 12 years old, and children 13-17 years old). (Figure 1)
- Texas coverage (71.9 percent) for children ages 6 months to 4 years exceeds the Healthy People 2020 (HP2020) goal of 70 percent. (Figure 1)
- Parent-reported influenza immunization coverage in Texas children six months to 17 years for the 2016-2017 flu season (60.3 ± 2.6 percent) did not significantly change from coverage in 2015-2016 (62.1 ± 3.2 percent). (Figure 2)
- Self-reported influenza coverage in Texas adults 18 years and older for the 2016-2017 flu season decreased 5.3 percent from 43.2 ± 2.7 percent in 2015-2016 to 37.9 ± 2.5 percent. (Figure 2)
- Influenza immunization coverage for the 2016-2017 flu season in Texas adults ≥ 18 years old (37.9 ± 2.5 percent) was lower than adults ≥ 18 nationwide (43.3 ± 0.6 percent).
- Influenza immunization coverage in Texas children 6 months through 17 years old (60.3 ± 2.6 percent) is not significantly different from childhood coverage nationwide (59.0 ± 0.7 percent).
- For the 2016-2017 season in Texas, Hispanic (44.0 ± 3.7 percent) and white, non-Hispanic (44.6 ± 2.9 percent) people ≥ 6 months of age have the highest influenza immunization coverage, whereas black non-Hispanic people have the lower coverage (37.2 ± 5.3 percent). (Figure 3)
- Influenza immunization coverage in Bexar County (64.4 ± 4.1 percent) and in the City of Houston (64.9 ± 4.6 percent) were higher than the national average (59.0 ± 0.7 percent) for the 2016-17 flu season among children 6 months to 17 years old. (Figure 4)

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Figure 1. Influenza Immunization Coverage in the US and Texas by Age Group, 2016-17 Season

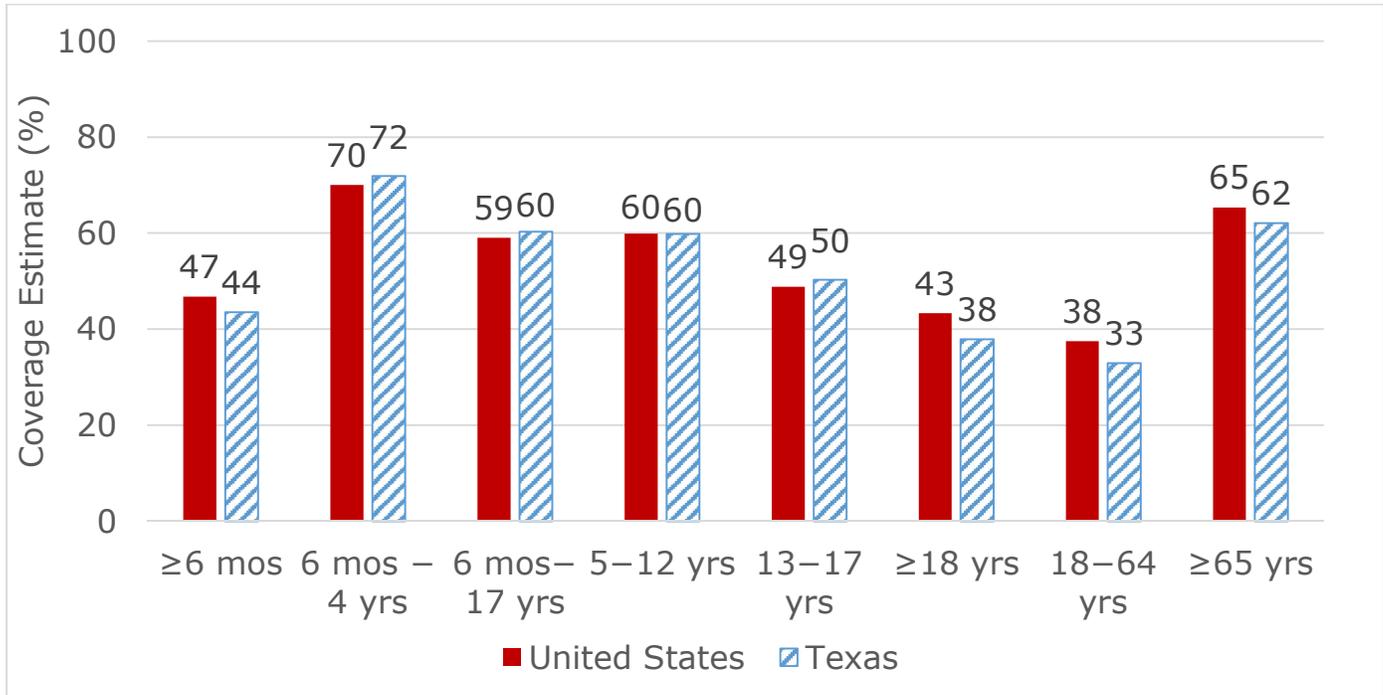
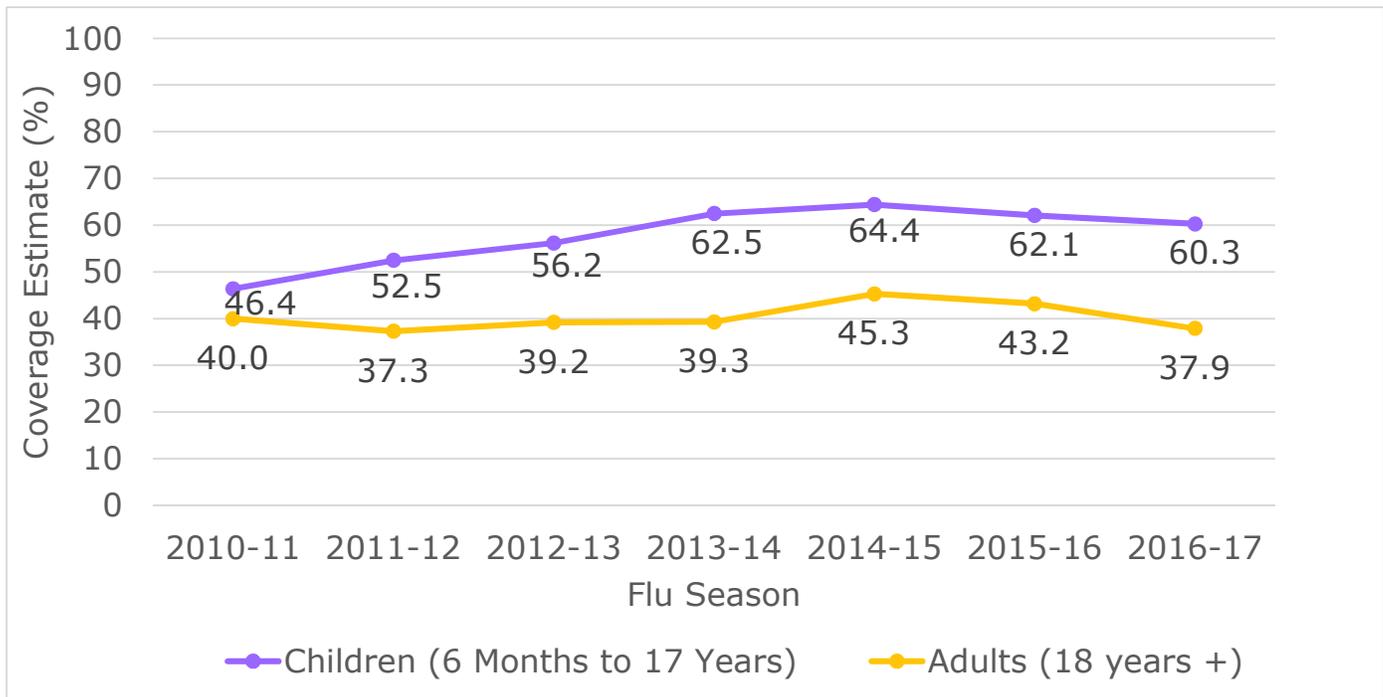


Figure 2. Seasonal Influenza Immunization Coverage in Texas for Adults and Children, 2010-2017.



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Figure 3. 2016-2017 Texas Seasonal Influenza Immunization Coverage Estimates in Persons ≥6 Months by Race.

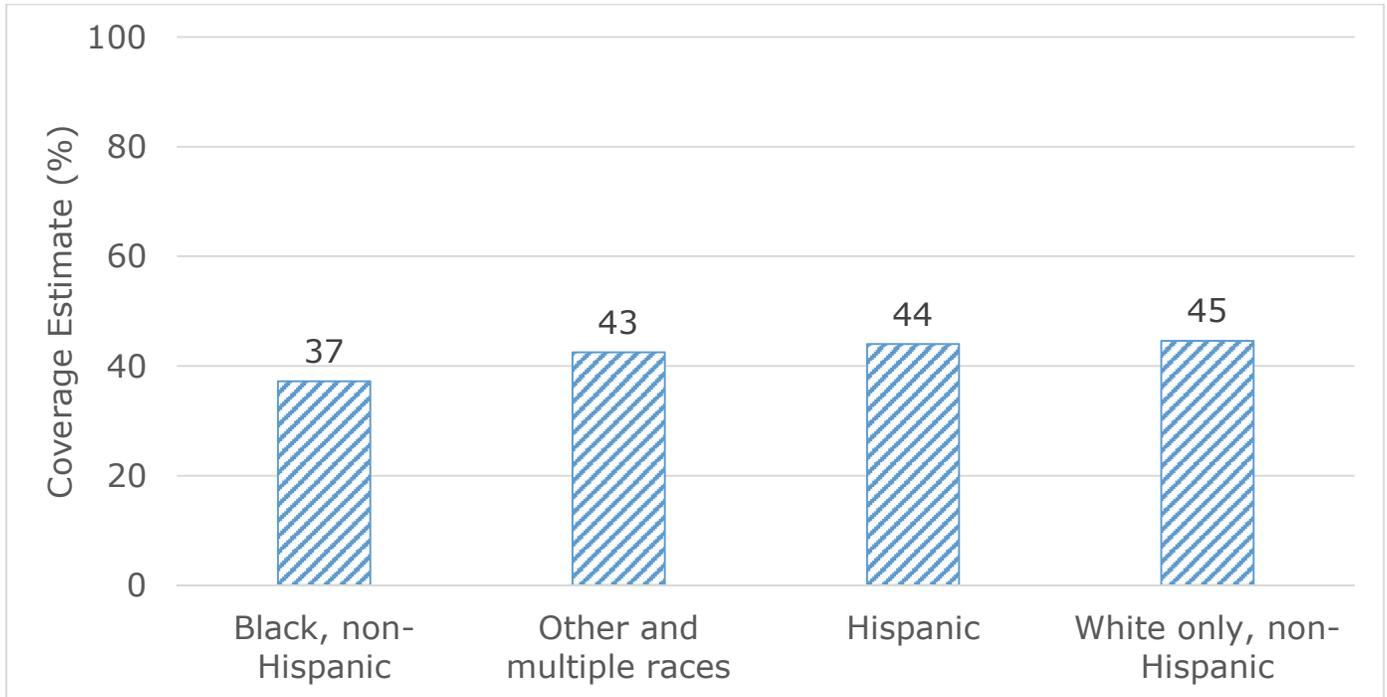
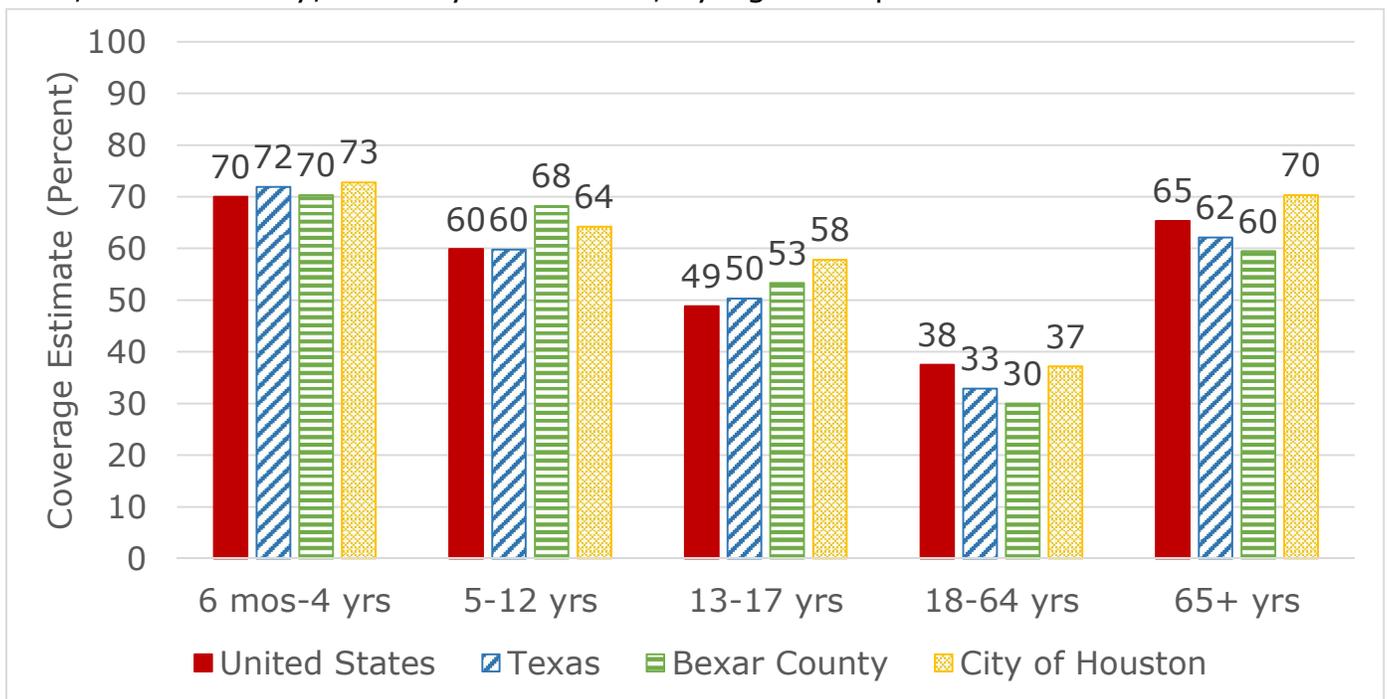


Figure 4. 2016-2017 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Coverage Estimates for the US, Texas, Bexar County, and City of Houston, by Age Group.



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DSHS Immunization Unit Activities for Influenza Immunization

The DSHS Immunization Unit plays an active role in monitoring and improving influenza immunization rates in Texas. The Unit provides educational material related to influenza vaccine, improves access to vaccine, communicates with stakeholders regarding vaccination rates and ways to improve coverage, and runs an immunization registry, ImmTrac2, to provide immunization records for Texans.

Additionally, the Immunization Unit oversees Texas Vaccine for Children (TVFC), a federally and state funded program which offers free vaccine to children 18 years old and younger who meet program qualifications (Medicaid-eligible, uninsured, under insured, American Indian, or Alaska Native). Eligible Texas children are vaccinated through health care providers that participate in the TVFC program. In the 2016-2017 influenza season, the Immunization Unit received more than 1.5 million doses of influenza vaccine from the CDC and distributed them to TVFC providers throughout the state to protect Texas children from the flu.

Conclusion

Overall, the 2016-2017 seasonal influenza immunization coverage in Texas was similar to coverage in 2015-2016. Efforts by DSHS, such as providing educational material to childcare facilities, have been focused primarily on improving coverage in young children. The coverage estimates detailed here show Texas meeting the established goal and performing above the national average for young children. However, older children (>4 years old) and adults in Texas fall below the HP2020 goal for 70 percent influenza immunization coverage. The DSHS Immunization Unit continues to promote influenza immunization for everyone ≥ 6 months of age eligible for vaccination. More information can be found on TexasFlu.org, the [Influenza page](#) of our website, or on the [CDC's Influenza Prevention](#) page.